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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 001046

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR FOR CA/OCS/ACS/EAP; EAP/EX; EAP/BCLTV;  
STATE FOR OES/STC (M.GOLDBERG); OES/IHA (D.SINGER AND  
N.COMELLA); EB FOR CBA/MERMOUD  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID/RDM/A (MFRIEDMAN)  
STATE PASS HHS/OGHA (WSTEIGER, EELVANDER, ABHAT)  
USDA FOR FAS/PASS TO APHIS  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP FOR LEW STERN  
USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCAROLL, SCLEMENTS AND PCHAPLIN)  
DEPT PASS TO AID  
AMEMBASSY ROME PASS FODAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [AMED](#) [TBIO](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [SOCI](#) [VM](#) [AFLU](#)  
SUBJECT: AVIAN FLU: U.S. BUSINESS CONCERN GROWS

1. SUMMARY (U) ConGen has noted an increase in interest in Avian Influenza (AI) pandemic preparedness among American Citizens and the U.S. business community in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). In searching for answers, more and more individuals are turning to the ConGen for guidance. An informal sampling of the foreign business community in HCMC shows a great variety in the level of preparedness. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) There has been a noticeable increase in the number of inquiries about AI from Americans working in HCMC. In general, the mood has shifted from vague concern to an active search for answers to specific questions. The European Chamber of Commerce recently organized an informational luncheon about AI, and the International School of Ho Chi Minh City - where most school-age ConGen dependents study - had a parent-teacher evening to discuss AI concerns. The HCMC American Chamber of Commerce has discussed AI in committee as an animal health issue, and has begun an ad hoc effort to collect information and compare notes regarding AI pandemic preparedness among its members.

3. (SBU) The primary focus of inquiries from the expatriate community is on the stockpiling and use of the antiviral drug Tamiflu. Cargill, British Petroleum (BP), the Franco-Vietnamese Hospital (a hospital used primarily by the French expatriate community), and International SOS (a medical services provider for many foreign companies), all have stores of Tamiflu. Cargill Vietnam has 5,000 doses of the antiviral and also has an AI awareness education program for its employees. (Note - Cargill's Vietnam business centers on production and marketing of agricultural feeds.) BP Vietnam began work six month ago on its preparedness plan, which we believe includes some Tamiflu stockpiling. The Franco-Vietnamese Hospital (FV) reported to EconOff that it had enough Tamiflu for its 500-plus staff. (Note: FV would not clarify to EconOff whether this means it has enough Tamiflu for a prophylaxis regimen or post-exposure treatment only. End note.)

4. (SBU) American companies also have human resource concerns related to AI. For example, while Nike has only 200-plus direct-hire employees in Vietnam, it employs 116,000 Vietnamese through its contractors. While Nike may not be directly responsible for these individuals, the company is looking for guidance on measures that could raise the general level of AI preparedness. Garment buyer MAST Industries, a subsidiary of The Limited Clothing Company, has also expressed to ConGen concerns similar to Nike's.

5. (U) Health experts from International SOS recommended in a presentation to the international business community that companies prepare a plan of action using World Health Organization (WHO) tripwires, phases one through six. International SOS further recommends that companies educate employees about flu symptoms and ask that individuals who have the flu stay away from the office for 10 days. In addition, according to this regimen, companies should stock up on hygienic supplies such as cleansers, masks and gloves, and should purchase enough Tamiflu for 20-30 percent of their employees (the predicted infection rate).

6. (U) COMMENT: Many companies that have just begun preparing for a broader possible AI outbreak have contacted the Consulate for guidance and information. ConGen has advised those who ask to consult the websites of the Department, the Centers for Disease Control and WHO. These inquiries are likely to increase in frequency. END COMMENT

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